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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSC-01 CPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 NIC-01 IO-13 CU-04 AID-20 EB-11 OMB-01

RSR-01 /136 W
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R 312005 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2312
INFO RULPALJ/ USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3869

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PINT, AR
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON NEW CABINET

REF: BA-3800 AND 3765

1. SUMMARY: NEW CABINET REPRESENTS MODERATE MAIN WING OF PERONISM AND WITH ONE OR TWO POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS LOOKS COMPETENT. IF PRESENT CABINET CAN PRODUCE REASONABLE RESULTS, CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT MODERATES CAN RETAIN CONTROL OF MOVEMENT-- AND GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. CAMPOR A' S CABINET IS CLEARLY A MODERATE ONE AND IN MOST CASES SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN APPOINTED WITH A VIEW TO COMPETENCE. RIGHI AND ROBLEDO MAY BE EXCEPTIONS BUT THEIR APPOINTMENTS RESPOND TO SPECIAL CONDITIONS (SEE BELOW). ANTONIO BENITEZ IS ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING JURISTS IN PERONIST RANKS. LIKEWISE, GOMEZ MORALES IS PROBABLY THEIR BEST ECONOMIST AND TAIANA IS ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED FIGURES IN ARGENTINA NOT ONLY IN MEDICINE BUT ALSO IN FIELD OF EDUCATION. JUAN CARLOS PUIG, WHILE RELATIVELY UNKNOWN, HAS REPUTATION FOR TECHNICAL COMPETENCE AND
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SCHOLARSHIP. HE MAY HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS IDEAL INSTRUMENT TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES DECIDED UPON BY OTHERS-- I. E. BY PERON AND CAMPORA.

3. APPOINTMENTS AT UNDERSECRETARY LEVEL ARE EQUALLY ENCOURAGING (SEE BA-3800 FOR COMMENTS ON ECONOMIC TEAM). POSSIBLE EXCEPTION HERE IS APPOINTMENT OF JORGE ALBERTO VAZQUEZ AS UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. HE IS SAID TO BE SOMETHING OF A RADICAL WHO MAY HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH DISGRACED YOUTH LEADER RODOLFO GALIMBERTI. IF SO, HIS APPOINTMENT IS PUZZLING. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION ON HIM IN ORDER TO MORE ACCURATELY ASSESS THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS APPOINTMENT.

4. APPOINTMENT OF ESTEBAN RIGHI AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR WAS A SURPRISE. RIGHI IS A LAWYER AND IS CLOSE TO THE CAMPORA FAMILY. BUT HE IS ONLY 35 AND HARDLY HAS THE EXPERIENCE OR BACKGROUND FOR THE POST. HE MAY NOT LAST-- OR BE EXPECTED TO LAST. SOURCES CLOSE TO ANTONIO BENITEZ EARLIER REPORTED LATTER TO HAVE COMMENTED THAT BECAUSE OF DELICACY OF TERRORIST PROBLEM, AMONG OTHERS, WHOEVER TOOK OVER INTERIOR MINISTRY WOULD BE " QUEMADO" WITHIN SIX MONTHS. BENITEZ ALSO COMMENTED THAT IF IT UP TO PERON, HE, BENITEZ, WOULD BE DESIGNATED MINISTER OF JUSTICE, POSITION HE WANTED. IF IT UP TO CAMPORA, HOWEVER, CHANCES WERE HE WOULD BE NAMED TO INTERIOR; THIS BECAUSE BENITEZ IS NOT A MEMBER OF CAMPORA' S PERSONAL ENTOURAGE AND THEREFORE IS REGARDED BY LATTER AS EXPENDABLE. EVIDENTLY, PERON HAD FINAL WORD AND BENITEZ WENT TO JUSTICE. OTHERS EARLIER CONSIDERED TO BE CANDIDATES (SUCH AS ABAL MEDINA) FELL BY THE WAY. IN RIGHI, CAMPORA MAY HAVE HIT UPON SOMEONE HE CAN TRUST AND WHO AT SAME TIME, BECAUSE OF HIS AGE, IS EXPENDABLE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY. IF HE IS OVERWHELMED AT INTERIOR, HE HAS TIME FOR RECOVERY AND POLITICAL COMEBACK.

5. LITTLE IS KNOWN OF DEFENSE MINISTER ROBLEDO-- WHICH MAY BE A FACTOR IN HIS FAVOR. ACCORDING TO PERONIST SOURCES, HIS APPOINTMENT WAS ORDERED BY PERON, THROUGH LOPEZ REGA, AT LAST MINUTE. RATIONALE, REPORTEDLY, WAS THAT HE IS CIVILIAN WHO NONETHELESS HAD SOME EXPERIENCE IN SECURITY MATTERS (HE WAS ONCE CHIEF OF POLICE IN IRIONDO DEPARTMENT) AND WAS NOT A MAJOR FIGURE IN PERONIST MOVEMENT. BY VERY FACT THAT FEW REALLY KNOW HIM OR WHERE HE STANDS, ROBLEDO IS IN GOOD POSITION TO DEVELOP FRESH POSITION WITH MILITARY. HOW EFFECTIVE HE WILL BE IN DOING SO

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REMAINS TO BE SEEN. COMMENT: RATIONALE INDICATED BY PERONISTS NOTWITHSTANDING, IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY TO US THAT ROBLEDO APPOINTMENT STEMS FROM FACT THAT RELATIONS WITH MILITARY ARE KEY AREA TO WHICH CAMPORA AND PERON MAY GIVE A GOOD DEAL OF PERSONAL ATTENTION. DEFENSE MINISTER, THEREFORE, MAY BE SOMETHING OF A FILTER-- A SITUATION WHICH MIGHT PROVE GALLING TO MORE PRESTIGIOUS FIGURE IN THE MOVEMENT.

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6. ONE LINE OF SPECULATION CURRENTLY MAKING THE ROUNDS IN BUENOS AIRES (APPARENTLY SPREAD CHIEFLY BY EXTREME LEFT WING OF PERONIST MOVEMENT, WHICH IS UNHAPPY WITH MODERATE CABINET, AND ANTI- PERONISTS WHO WISH TO PUT WORST POSSIBLE FACE ON THINGS) IS THAT MODERATES WILL SOON BE REPLACED BY " REVOLUTIONARY CABINET" WHICH WILL IMPLEMENT RADICAL PROGRAMS. EVIDENCE ON WHICH SUCH SPECULATION IS BASED IS INCONSEQUENTIAL- CONSISTING LARGELY OF THIRD- HAND RUMORS AND STRAINED DEDUCTION. EMBASSY IS INCLINED TO VIEW THIS NOT AS INTERIM CABINET BUT ONE CAMPORA INTENDS TO GO WITH AS LONG AS POSSIBLE-- WITH, INEVITABLY, SOME INDIVIDUAL CHANGES. MORE MEANINGFUL QUESTION, WE BELIEVE, IS WHETHER OR NOT PRESENT TEAM CAN PRODUCE. IF IT CAN AND REASONABLE PROGRESS IS MADE DURING NEXT SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR, THEN MODERATES HAVE GOOD CHANCE OF RETAINING CONTROL. IF THEY CANNOT, PERON AND CAMPORA MIGHT INDEED TURN TO MORE EXTREME SOLUTIONS. IN SUM, THE APPOINTMENT OF SUCH A MODERATE CABINET IS ENCOURAGING AND BODES WELL FOR THE FUTURE, BUT AN ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY REMAINS.
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